

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT ENRG SPOP

SUBJ: LUNCHEON FOR ADECO LEADERS

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, I AM SPENDING THE SUMMER MONTHS ON A SERIES OF LUNCHEONS FOR VARIOUS VENEZUELAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, FOLLOWING MY USUAL RULE OF TAKING SAFETY IN NUMBERS. CARACAS TELEGRAM 5524 REPORTED OUR QUITE PLEASANT LUNCHEON FOR COPEYANO CANDIDATE LORENZO FERNANDEZ, AND THIS TELEGRAM IS THE SECOND IN THE SERIES. UPCOMING LUNCHEONS IN AUGUST ARE ON THE 8TH FOR TINOCO, THE 10TH FOR BURELLI RIVAS, AND THE 15TH FOR FOVITO VILLALBA, I DOUBT IF PAZ GALARRAGA WOULD ACCEPT NOR WOULD RANGEL, WHILE GENERAL GARCIA VILLASMIL IS SUCH A DIM FIGURE AS NOT TO BE WORTH THE EXPENSE.

2. THE ADECOs TODAY WERE IN A VIGOROUS AND OPTIMISTIC MOOD. MY COLLEAGUES AND I WERE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT FORMER PRESIDENT ROMULO BETANCOURT SEEMED MUCH MORE FRAIL THAN WHEN I SAW HIM A MONTH AGO (CARACAS 4975), BUT IN CONTRAST CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ SEEMED FULL OF BEANS BUT WAS ALMOST OUTSHOUTED BY PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY GONZALO BARRIOS. THEY WERE ALL--INCLUDING LEPAGE AND PINERUA--

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IN A FEISTY MOOD AND, WITHOUT UNDERRATING THE VERY REAL

MUSCLE OF THE COPEYANOS AND THEIR GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY--
SEEMINGLY CONFIDENT OF VICTORY.

3. ON MATTERS AFFECTING OUR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS, CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND GONZALO BARRIOS INDICATED THEY WOULD GO SLOWLY ON AN EVENTUAL ENERGY AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES, GONZALO BARRIOS SAYING THAT NEGOTIATION OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT WAS CLEARLY OUT OF THE QUESTION DURING THE ELECTORAL PERIOD (I AGREED); BUT TO MY SURPRISE CARLOS ANDRES SUGGESTED THAT INDEED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTIONS THERE MIGHT BE A "WINDOW" FOR A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATION. I RESTATED OUR POSITION ON WHAT I THOUGHT WOULD BE AN EQUITABLE AGREEMENT.

4. ON ANOTHER ASPECT OF U.S. COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, CARLOS ANDRES SAID VERY FIRMLY THAT HE THOUGHT COLOR TELEVISION WAS PREMATURE FOR VENEZUELA; BUT HE AGREED WITH GONZALO BARRIOS THAT ONCE THE VENEZUELANS DECIDED TO HAVE THE NEWEST GADGET, THEY WOULD HAVE IT EVEN IF IT WAS NOT A SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC NECESSITY. IN THIS RESPECT, CARLOS ANDRES SAID HIMSELF THAT HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED THE "RANCHITOS" AROUND CARACAS AND THAT EVEN IN THE POOREST HOVEL WHERE AT TIMES FOUR FAMILIES SEEMED TO SLEEP TOGETHER ON THE SAME BED, THERE WAS INVARIABLY A TELEVISION SET.

5. ON A THIRD ASPECT OF U.S. INTEREST IN VENEZUELA, BOTH CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND GONZALO BARRIOS (A BACHELOR) WERE IN AGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING. IN FACT, CARLOS ANDRES EXPATIATED AT GREAT LENGTH ON THE PROBLEM POSED BY AN EXCESS OF JOB-HUNGRY YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT JOBS.

6. MY OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE LUNCHEON WAS THAT IT WAS A SUCCESS, THAT THE POTENTIAL FUTURE PRESIDENT WOULD FOLLOW A NATIONALISTIC LINE, BUT THAT HE WOULD BE CAREFUL TO ADJUST THAT LINE TO A POLICY OF REAL POLITIK. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE UNITED STATES.
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